

German and European thoughts on crime prevention

Assistance for the developing world

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"If you want to build a ship,
don't drum up people to collect wood
and don't assign them tasks and work,
but rather teach them
to long for the endless immensity of the sea."

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (1900-1944)

Over the last 30 years we are able to look back on a very positive development of crime prevention projects, programmes and methods in Europe. To a large extent this qualitative and quantitative development has, at large, taken place in parallel in the individual states and in the European Union as well as in scientific and non-governmental organisations at European level.

Whatever works quite well in Germany and Europe in the overall field of crime prevention, whatever has shown effects and impact and whatever meets with particular attention in Europe due to practice, science and politics also appears, as a matter of principle, to be of interest for other regions of the world. However, it cannot and must not be transferred at a ratio of 1:1 to other states and societies.

The UN publications on crime prevention hitherto show on the one hand that there is an increasing number of fundamental and principle findings, questions and recommendations of generally accepted relevance. On the other hand, however, it is the only alternative that every state, every society and also every region develops and permanently cultivates its own (crime) prevention culture.¹

To begin with a few positive experiences and findings on crime prevention with a German or European context are listed below that are relevant for the guidance and support (technical assistance) of the developing world. The list is supplemented by a choice of central European institutions in the area of crime prevention as well as by a few suggestions for possible initiatives and forms in the assistance area.

¹ European Forum for Urban Safety (Ed.): Justyna Kulach & Nigel Whiskin & Erich Marks: Cultures of Prevention - Urban Crime Prevention Policies in Europe: Towards a common Culture?, Paris, 2006

A A few positive experiences and findings on crime prevention with German or European context respectively

1. Crime prevention is primarily a municipal task

Crime prevention has developed into a primary task of the municipalities and towns. It is organised in a citizen-friendly way and is hence increasingly at district level in larger towns. The following basic principle has proved of value for the management of municipal prevention bodies: crime prevention is a management issue (duty of the mayor). Amongst others detailed information is to be found in the Zaragoza Manifesto 2006.²

2. Crime prevention is an interdisciplinary network

In particular the police, justice, school, health care and juvenile and social authorities rank among the central services and occupational groups in regional networks for crime prevention. The police frequently take up a special role in the network. In the process it arises that successful crime prevention can neither just be carried out by the police nor without their active cooperation.³

3. Crime prevention is a responsibility concerning all of society

The responsibility for crime prevention cannot be taken exclusively by an interdisciplinary network of public agencies. Only the active integration of non-governmental organisations, private relief organisations, federations, religious associations and the economic sector lead to a mutual responsibility concerning all of society.⁴

4. Crime prevention is an approach for nearly all criminal offences

In principle crime prevention approaches are not bound to certain elements of an offence. At the same time it must not remain unheeded that the global and central problem situations and consequently the prevention situations of our time, "climate change", "global nutrition", "energy supply" and "globalised financial transactions" together with their effects are apparently and continuously also maturing into new fields of crime prevention work.

5. Crime prevention is economically successful

Particularly in the English-speaking area, evaluations and meta-evaluations have shown – considered for medium-term and longer periods of time - that crime prevention projects can achieve a multiple return of the invested means due to savings in justice, welfare and health care.⁵

6. Crime prevention requires close cooperation with other areas of prevention

The objective of crime prevention can only be achieved in close cooperation with other areas of

² "Security, Democracy and Cities, the Zaragoza Manifesto 2006 (<http://zaragoza2006.fesu.org>)

³ Detailed information can be found for instance via the police newsletter at www.polizei-newsletter.de

⁴ Amongst others detailed information can be found at www.theccv.eu and www.gccop.org

⁵ Amongst others detailed information can be found at www.campbellcollaboration.org

prevention such as prevention of addiction⁶ and prevention of traffic. Crime prevention objectives however also appear as a side effect of other areas of prevention like health care⁷. The definition of professional interfaces and the reciprocal acceptance of the different objectives, methods, technical expertise and standards of the various areas of prevention have proved to be particularly important.

7. Crime prevention is a problem-oriented solution strategy

In principle crime prevention is cause-oriented. The concrete projects, strategies and methods of crime prevention conform to the actual problem situations on the spot. Amongst others, detailed information can be found under the keyword problem-oriented policing.⁸

8. Above all, crime prevention is a process-like attitude

Crime prevention is defined in different ways.⁹ In doing so it must be considered that (crime) prevention in particular is an attitude and a permanent development and learning process by individuals, groups and the entire society. Part of this understanding of prevention is also that it is never too early or too late for its application.

9. Crime prevention is applied subsidiarity

Crime prevention takes place today at a total of five levels: local, regional, national, continental and international/supranational. It has transpired that clear divisions of work and agreements of all organisations and institutions operating at different levels are particularly important. Various tasks fall to the actors at different levels that should preferably be structured with subsidiary basic understanding and hence add up to an effective overall concept.¹⁰

10. Crime prevention demands an enlightened crime policy

Cesare Beccaria's (1738 – 1794) statement is eligible: "it is better to prevent crime rather than to punish it". Crime prevention is most successful at the place where it is a firm component of a rational and enlightened social and crime policy and built upon human rights and a democratic constitutional state.¹¹

11. Crime prevention is proving to be a qualified occupational field

Over the past years specialised further education and advanced training programmes have been developed in several European countries for full-time and non-executive employees in various fields of crime prevention. The necessity of further specialisations, also at planning and

⁶ For example, detailed information can be found at EMCDDA, European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction www.emcdda.europa.eu

⁷ See footnote 19

⁸ www.popcenter.org

⁹ For this comp. www.wikipedia.com/crime-prevention

¹⁰ The report published by the IPC in 2008 "The first International Report on Crime Prevention and Community Safety: Trends and Perspectives" gives a good overview. This report offers a comprehensive analysis of the situation of crime prevention and community safety in the world and provides an overview of new developments, promising practices, and emerging strategies to respond to crime trends. The publication of this report will coincide with the publication of ICPC's International Compendium of Crime Prevention Practices to Inspire Action Across the World. www.crime-prevention-intl.org

¹¹ On the principles of enlightened crime policy see Lawrence Sherman Enlightened Justice: Consequentialism and Empiricism from Beccaria to Braithwaite, in: Marks, Erich & Meyer, Anja & Linssen, Ruth (Eds.): Quality in Crime Prevention, Hanover 2005, ISBN 3-8334-4194-1, www.beccaria.de

management level, as well as new challenges in the area of knowledge management, have also led to initial planning for specific training offers in crime prevention.¹²

12. Crime prevention has an important intersection with restorative justice

Approaches in mediation, conflict management and reconciliation of perpetrator and victim have undergone a very positive development over the past years. In the meantime, the restorative justice¹³ approach makes an important contribution towards the further development of modern social cultures of criticism.

13. Crime prevention needs transnational cooperations

The realisation of specific support programmes for crime prevention by the European Union for more than 10 years (e.g. GROTIUS, AGIS, ISEC, etc.)¹⁴ has indicated the necessity and in particular the chances and benefits of supranational cooperation in the area of the 3rd pillar of the EU. The various recommendations that have been resolved by the Council of Europe¹⁵ over the past decades are also of great importance.

14. Crime prevention needs civic commitment

Concrete possibilities of participation are becoming increasingly more complex for citizens, citizens' representatives and citizens' experts. The principle of global thinking is more essential than ever in order to be able to act competently on a local basis. The further development of the civil society is also involved in how we can make our society collectively safer and more attractive, because civic commitment, democratic participation and moral courage hold society together and also have a crime prevention effect.

15. Crime prevention develops its own standards

The development, application and further development of standards for quality management in crime prevention is increasingly gaining in importance. The Beccaria standards¹⁶ are a concrete example of this.

16. Crime prevention needs specific prevention management

It is meanwhile possible to fall back on numerous tried and tested tools and management recommendations for the professional management of crime prevention projects, for instance the crime rate analyses by Ron Clarke and John Eck¹⁷, the "Guidance on Local Safety Audits"¹⁸ or the approach in "5 Is" by Paul Ekblom¹⁹

17. Crime prevention needs evaluation

Projects and programmes on crime prevention are being evaluated to an increasing degree. An

¹² For example the Beccaria qualification programme and the Beccaria master degree course www.beccaria.de

¹³ www.restorativejustice.org

¹⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/funding

¹⁵ www.coe.int

¹⁶ The Beccaria Standards include measures and requirements for quality planning, execution and assessment of crime prevention programmes and projects. It applies to seven key steps of a project. www.beccaria.de

¹⁷ Clarke & Eck: "Become a Problem-Solving Crime-Analyst in 55 small Steps" www.popcenter.org;

¹⁸ Guidance on Local Safety Audits: A Compendium of International Practice, published by the European Forum for Urban Safety (EFUS), Paris 2007, ISBN 2-913181-30-9, www.efus.org

¹⁹ On this see www.designagainstcrime.com or www.beccaria.de

improved exchange, enriching for all participants, between frequently strictly separated working areas of politics, practice and science on the objectives and effects of crime prevention measures²⁰ is linked to this.

18. Crime prevention also works due to adaptation

It is also not always necessary to re-invent the wheel when it comes to crime prevention. The Nurse Family Partnership Programme (NFP) of David Olds and its adaptation by the Pro Kind in Deutschland²¹ foundation or the communities that care (ctc) programme in the Netherlands²² are examples for the adaptation of successful programmes and projects from other countries.

19. Crime prevention needs exchange and benchmarking

Projects, programmes and individual crime prevention measures should not only be evaluated more systematically, they should also be compared and improved by means of benchmarking processes at a national and international level. In addition to good practice and best practice processes, appropriate interdisciplinary congresses²³ as well as awards and prizes²⁴ also have a quality-promoting effect.

20. Crime prevention reduces unreported cases

As exemplified by the new handling of the problem area of domestic violence in the majority of European countries, it is possible to demonstrate that measures in the intersection area of intervention and prevention are also suitable for reducing the criminological unreported cases.²⁵

B Choice of European institutions of special significance for the area of crime prevention

The following list captures a few central European organisations and institutions that are active and have crime prevention as their main task. Further information on individual programmes and key activities as well as further links arise from the mentioned respective Internet addresses.

European Union

- supranational organisation -

.... Strengthening the European Union as an area of freedom, security and justice: One of the fundamental objectives of the European Union, as stated by the Treaty of Lisbon, which was signed in 2007, and is now undergoing a ratification process in the member states, is to offer its citizens an area of freedom, security and justice without internal borders.

<http://ec.europa.eu/justice-home>

²⁰ Amongst others detailed information can be found at the European Initiative CRIMPREV (Assessing Deviance, Crime and Prevention in Europe) www.gern-cnrs.com as well as at www.crimereduction.org

²¹ www.kfn.de; www.stiftung-pro-kind.de

²² www.narcis.info

²³ For example the annual German Congress on Crime Prevention www.gcoep.org

²⁴ For example The Stockholm Prize in Criminology www.criminologyprize.com and the European Crime Prevention Award (ECPA) www.eucpn.org

²⁵ Detailed information can be found at http://www.coe.int/t/pace/campaign/stopviolence/default_EN.asp

Council of Europe (CoE)

- supranational organisation -

Since 1993 the Council of Europe has been devoting itself increasingly to securing democratic safety. In particular this includes: dedication to human rights, securing democratic principles and principles of the rule of law as well as promotion of economic and social progress.

www.coe.int

European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN)

- EU member states organisation -

The EUCPN was set up in May 2001 by an EU Council decision to promote crime prevention activity in Member States across the EU, and to provide a means through which valuable good practice in preventing crime, mainly "traditional" crime, could be shared.

www.eucpn.org

European Forum for Urban Safety (EFUS)

- nongovernmental organisation -

EFUS is a European network of more than 300 local authorities established in 1987 in Barcelona, on the initiative of Gilbert Bonnemaïson, former Mayor of Epinay-sur-Seine, and supported by the Council of Europe. The network aims to strengthen crime reduction policies and to promote the role of local authorities in national and European policies.

www.urbansecurity.org

European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control (HEUNI)

- scientific organisation -

Affiliated with the United Nations, HEUNI is the European link in the network of institutes operating within the framework of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme.

www.heuni.fi

European Society of Criminology (ESC)

- scientific organisation -

The European Society of Criminology was founded in 2000. The society aims to bring together in Europe persons actively engaged in research, teaching and/or practice in the field of criminology.

www.esc-eurocrim.org

Annual International Forum for Crime Prevention (AIF)

- annual congress -

The Annual International Forum is organised within the German Congress on Crime Prevention. The desired effect of the German Congress on Crime Prevention (Foundation) is since 1995 to present and strengthen crime prevention within a broad societal framework. Thus it contributes to crime reduction as well as to the prevention and the decrease of becoming a victim and fear of crime.

www.aif-prevention.org

C A few concrete proposals

In conclusion a few proposals are presented for concrete strategies and cooperations of global crime prevention. Crime prevention situations and concrete projects exist all over the world and, depending on the respective social, national and economical local realities, are exceedingly different in their problem situations, objectives and resources. And for all that the widest varieties of approaches are also only a few mouse clicks away from each other on the World Wide Web. More than ever it is essential that we think and communicate globally in order to act effectively on a local basis. Among others the following strategies and initiatives are desirable in addition to UN-coordinated projects on the part of UNODC²⁶, UNHABITAT and other UN organisations:

- Stronger integration of crime prevention subjects into the various national and international development aid programmes²⁷;
- Offensive use of the Internet in the area of project databases;
- More offensive use of the Internet in the area of the direct exchange of contacts²⁸;
- Development of new financing strategies for project work all over the world²⁹;
- Setup of partnerships as well as execution of concrete partnership projects also at local and regional level³⁰;
- Consultancy and cooperation projects under the direction of pertinent international non-governmental institutions.³¹

This list only includes a few examples. Many other examples are already in practice or are to be developed in the future. The principle appears important that we also have to learn and practice crime prevention in the field of work and that we must be able to better share and jointly deal with the problem situations existing all over the world as well as their by all means existent improvement and solution strategies.

²⁶ Detailed information to be obtained from Slawomir Redo: "For Urban Crime Prevention in Sub-Sahara – United Nations Crime Prevention Guidelines at work; in: Coester, Marc & Marks, Erich (Eds.): International Perspectives of Crime Prevention - Contributions from the 1st Annual International Forum, Hanover 2008, ISBN 978-3-936999-47-1

²⁷ Detailed information can be found at www.sumconsult.de

²⁸ As an example see www.blogger.com/CTHR

²⁹ As an example see www.projectbetterplace.com on this

³⁰ The German Congress on Crime Prevention will shortly be starting an initiative on this www.gcocp.org

³¹ As an example see the Bogota Project of the European Forum for Urban Safety www.efus.org